



# *imagine!*

## Introducing Your Child to the Arts

*Pull-Out Guide*

### **A SUMMARY GUIDE TO APPROPRIATE ARTS ACTIVITIES FOR AGES THREE – EIGHT**

This chart, taken from the Arts Education Partnership's publication *Young Children and the Arts: Making Creative Connections*, offers information about children's developmental stages from ages three to eight, and includes examples of arts activities that adults can do with children at these different stages.

*NOTE: All children grow and develop at different rates. It is important to recognize that children's developmental growth varies, and these benchmarks suggest a range of actions that are considered normal. Adults should follow children's cues as a signal for determining their developmental needs. Adults concerned that a child is not developing appropriately should check with the child's pediatrician.*

AGES

STAGES

EXAMPLES OF WHAT CHILDREN DO DURING THIS STAGE

WHAT ADULTS AND CHILDREN CAN DO TOGETHER IN THE ARTS

3-4 YEARS OF AGE

Preschoolers’ strengths and motor skills, along with their more adult-like body proportions, allow greater opportunities to explore the world.

Children can count to five and higher during this stage.

They start to play with other children and are more likely to share.

They are generally more cooperative and enjoy new experiences.

Ask many questions, mainly those that begin with “why.”

Talk about things and make up stories.

Print large capital letters using pencil or crayon.

Cut figures with scissors, and may be able to print first name.

Push and pull a wagon.

Attempt to get dressed on their own.

Gain a sense of direction and relationship to others’ space.

Begin to show social skills and manners.

Can match shapes, colors, and patterns.

Can draw faces with some detail.

With direction, can play group games such as “Ring Around the Rosey” and musical chairs.

Pantomime characters from books read with children. Ask them to guess characters.

Imitate movements made by objects (such as cars) and other people (such as drivers).

Construct collages using paper, glue, scissors, and magazine cutouts. Talk with them about the collage or create a story together.

Hum tunes to familiar songs and allow children to add the lyrics that go with the melody.

Allow children to observe themselves in the mirror while dancing or acting out a story.

Bring small groups of children to interactive performances and exhibits.

4-5 YEARS OF AGE

Preschoolers learn greatly from interaction with others. They begin to understand that they have feelings and opinions that are different from others.

Children at this stage are more likely to understand and remember the relationships, concepts, and strategies that they acquire through first-hand, meaningful experiences.

They have longer attention spans and enjoy activities that involve exploring, investigating, and stretching their imaginations.

Can copy simple geometric figures, dress self, and use more sophisticated utensils.

Use language to express thinking and increasingly complex sentences in speaking to others. Express their own feelings when listening to stories.

Enjoy using words in rhymes and understand nonsense and using humor.

Can be very imaginative and like to exaggerate.

Say and begin writing the alphabet.

Can identify what is missing from a picture (such as a face without a nose).

Can identify basic colors.

Have better control in running, jumping, and hopping but tend to be clumsy.

Discover with children how the body can move to music and the difference when there is no music.

Create music with children using empty containers as drums. (Empty plastic containers filled with beans and rice can serve as maracas, for example.)

Make a patchwork quilt with scraps of materials sewn together with yarn. Create and illustrate stories based on the quilt.

Encourage children to assume roles of family members or literary figures in improvisations. Base them on children’s experiences, family customs, books, or songs.

Recreate drawings from favorite books.

5-8 YEARS OF AGE

School-age children are able to make conscious decisions about art, music, dance, and theater and respond to them with feelings and emotion.

They learn to compare and contrast different sounds, pictures, and movements.

They become increasingly skilled at creating their own art, songs, stories, and dance movements.

Since children learn in an integrated fashion, it is vital that their learning experiences incorporate multiple domains of development, including cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional.

Have good body control for doing cartwheels and better balance for learning to ride a bike.

Play jump rope and hopscotch.

Can build inventive model buildings from cardboard and other materials.

Begin spelling, writing, and enjoy telling stories to other children and adults.

Become increasingly independent and will try new activities on their own.

Represent familiar actions like making pizza and doing chores in creative movement and dance activities. Allow the children to choose movements and ask the reasons for those choices.

Write and recite poetry and paint pictures that depict themes such as nature, school, and family. Ask questions and encourage discussion.

Exhibit children’s artwork, and hang it so others can look at and respond to it.

Make scrapbooks or portfolios to keep favorite stories, photos, and artwork.

Collect tapes and recordings of music and encourage children to select favorites.

Encourage improvisations and stories, and provide materials that offer imaginary props.